

interference occurred and when it did not occur, every possible result has been claimed as proof that Washington Democrats should rip up our democracy's rule book and write a new one that benefits them.

The latest phony justification has been the false notion that a few States' mainstream voting laws equal some kind of assault on democracy as we know it. Of course, that is absolutely utter nonsense. Americans want it to be easy to vote and hard to cheat. Voter ID protections are hugely popular. Basic voter roll maintenance is common sense.

The new law in Georgia, for example, provides for more flexible early voting and absentee voting than many blue States, including New York. But the facts weren't about to stop the Democrats' big lie. The absurd comparison to Jim Crow segregation and all kinds of other horrors have continued apace.

To provide a little more context about this fake hysteria, we can also look internationally. As one columnist recently observed in the Washington Post, the balance struck by the State of Georgia amounts to "one of the most expansive voting access laws in the world. Most other countries do not allow no-excuse absentee voting, and dropboxes are also virtually unknown elsewhere," other democracies around the world. "If Georgia's elections are undemocratic, then almost all of our democratic allies are also undemocratic."

If liberal activists and woke corporations believed their own rhetoric, they wouldn't stop at boycotting and threatening the State of Georgia. They couldn't possibly. They would be busy trying to divest from most of our NATO allies and essentially the rest of the entire developed world.

Some European countries allow mail-in voting, but most do not. We constantly hear from our socialist friends how we should be emulating Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. Well, none of them allow in-country postal voting—not a one. Bring on the boycotts, I guess.

And you don't even want to hear about early voting. Goodness gracious. But France, Spain, Germany, Italy, the UK, Ireland—not a day of in-person early voting in any of those countries, none of them. That is according to an international NGO that studies democracy.

So, remember, the Texas and Georgia laws codify a whole lot of early voting, mail-in voting, and lots of election-day voting.

And this is supposed to be the death of democracy? Some outrage on a global and historic scale?

Give me a break. What nonsense.

Even going by Texas's new proposals, there will be voting by mail in Paris, TX, but not in Paris, France. There would be almost 2 weeks of in-person early voting in New Berlin, TX, but zero days in Berlin, Germany. I am sure Democrats will be yelling at the

Fortune 500 to boycott Europe any day now—any day now.

Of course, the reality is that these moving goalposts are absolutely fake. The frantic outrage is phony. It is all meant to justify a political power grab that Democrats have had written and waiting since years before any of these new State laws, which are supposedly prompting it—yet another awful plank that my colleagues across the aisle want to hide in the reckless taxing-and-spending spree they hope to ram through Congress.

TERRORISM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now on one final matter, last week, some of our colleagues expressed disapproval of U.S. strikes against al-Shabaab terrorists in Somalia. I find their views difficult to understand.

Al-Shabaab poses a significant threat to U.S. interests. But you don't have to take my word for it. Late in 2019, the leader of al-Shabaab, an al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist group based in Somalia, said:

Our biggest target today is the Americans The only reason we have exerted all this effort and undertaken all this preparation today is to attack the American troops.

In the assessment of the commander of U.S. Africa Command, U.S. General Stephen Townsend, that is coming from "the largest, wealthiest, and most violent Al Qaeda-associated group in the world" and "the primary African violent extremist organization threat to American interests."

This is not a new threat. Al-Shabaab was designated a foreign terrorist organization back in 2008. Its leaders declared allegiance to al-Qaida in 2012, a year before their attack on the Westgate Mall in Kenya that killed 67 people. The Obama administration designated the group as an al-Qaida-associated force in 2016. That made it subject to the 2001 AUMF.

At the time, it was a difficult but telling acknowledgement that the al-Qaida terrorist threat was growing. The raid that killed Bin Laden had clearly not ended the threat his terrorists posed to our country.

As a result of its declared and demonstrated allegiance to al-Qaida, al-Shabaab is clearly subject to the 2001 authorization for the use of military force, no question. President Obama knew it. General Townsend knows it. Al-Shabaab themselves tell us they want Americans dead. What more, what more do the skeptics need?

If our colleagues do not want the U.S. military to conduct strikes against the al-Qaida terrorists responsible for killing Americans and threatening our interests, I would be interested to hear how they propose we defend against these threats.

So, by the way, with the administration's rushed withdrawal from Afghanistan, there are well-founded concerns that al-Qaida may be roaring back in that country.

So which al-Qaida affiliate should we stop pressuring—al-Shabaab, AQAP, ISIS? Should we stop hunting for al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaida?

Administrations of both parties have identified and supported local partners who share an interest in combating terrorists. By and large, this approach has succeeded in keeping pressure on the terrorists while keeping more Americans out of harm's way.

But despite the best efforts of local partners to keep the terrorists at bay and the best efforts of U.S. diplomats to broker peace, some terrorists do require direct action by the U.S. military to be stopped. These hard-core extremists pose a serious threat to American national security. They seek to attack our interests all around the world, including our homeland, if we let them.

The threat they pose will not recede if we lose focus. In fact, the exact opposite is the case. So I hope the Commander in Chief will exercise the authorities the Congress has provided him and the tools Congress has funded to keep America safe against the terrorists who continue to target our homeland and our interests abroad.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, with respect to infrastructure, Senators continue to make good progress on both tracks of legislation. Members should be prepared to vote again on cloture on the motion to proceed to the bipartisan infrastructure bill as early as tonight.

CAPITOL SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on another matter, yesterday, the Senate Appropriations Chairman, Senator LEAHY, announced a bipartisan agreement to provide \$2.1 billion in emergency supplemental funding to support the Capitol Police, reimburse our National Guard, and make sure all the critical functions of the Capitol Complex are properly funded.

The toll of January 6 and the impact of COVID had meant that funding for the Capitol Police, the Capitol Complex, and even for our National Guard was running low.

Capitol Police have been forced to cancel critical training and health services and have had to hold off on buying new, potentially lifesaving gear, like helmets and body armor and respirators.

Thankfully, the bipartisan agreement between the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee will replenish these critical funds and support the hard-working men and women who keep this building, Senators, staff, media, and Capitol employees safe.

I was pleased to hear the Republican leader support this supplemental appropriations bill this morning, and I look forward to working with our Republican colleagues to swiftly passing this legislation through the Senate.

And I must give accolades to the Rules Committee, led by Senators KLOBUCHAR and BLUNT. Their hearings and focus on this issue—the safety of the Capitol—has helped pave the way for the agreement, and we thank them for their continued diligence.

NOMINATIONS OF GWYNNE A. WILCOX AND DAVID M. PROUTY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, one final matter, by the end of today, the Senate will confirm two nominees on the NLRB, the National Labor Relations Board: Gwynne Wilcox and David Prouty. Both are champions for working Americans.

Ms. Wilcox, who hails from my home State of New York—I am proud to say—has spent her career representing workers and unions seeking to exercise their rights to organize. She is one of the Nation's leading experts on labor law, and if confirmed, she would make history as the first African-American woman to ever serve on the NLRB.

Like Ms. Wilcox, David Prouty has also spent a lifetime defending the rights of organized labor across the country, recently serving as the general counsel of the SEIU, one the Nation's largest unions.

Over the course of American history, the labor movement has been the single most powerful force in lifting Americans out of poverty and into the middle class. It was by coming to this country and joining a union that my grandfather entered the middle class and passed on even more opportunity to his children and then to me and my brother and sister.

So it is no mistake that as labor union participation has declined over the past few decades, wages have stalled as well, and folks are finding it harder and harder to stay in the middle class.

If we are going to strengthen the backbone of the middle class, we need to reinvigorate the labor movement and protect the rights of workers everywhere to organize and bargain collectively for their wages. Appointing these two labor champions to the NLRB is a great way to start.

And, to the American people, the confirmation today of these two NLRB

labor champions is a direct result of having a Democratic majority in the Senate versus having a Republican majority.

Under Leader MCCONNELL and Republicans, the NLRB, which is typically divided between two parties, had only Republican appointees for the first time in its 85-year history. None of them had any experience in labor policy. They are almost atavistically against working people and helped management—the big bosses—to prevent people from organizing and making it harder to stay organized if you were. It was awful, and it is one of the reasons that middle-class incomes have not accelerated in the last 2 decades.

In fact, the Republicans were so intent on not having the NLRB defend the rights of working people that under Leader MCCONNELL a Democratic seat on the NLRB was held vacant for nearly 3 years. If the American people want to know which side each party is on, just look at the NLRB: Democrats appointing pro-labor people who fight for higher salaries, higher pensions, higher health benefits; Republicans making sure the NLRB doesn't function and allowing the big bosses to take a dominant role in negotiations with their workers.

Even during the years when President Trump was in the White House and Republicans had a majority on the NLRB, Leader MCCONNELL blocked Democrats from appointing a minority member to the Board. They didn't want a minority member on the Board even though they would have the majority, the Republicans. It is not a stretch to say if Democrats had not taken the majority in January, these important posts to the NLRB might never have been filled.

So, look, Senate Democrats are working with the Biden Administration to make sure the National Labor Relations Board does what it is intended to do: stand up for working Americans; make sure they have a much better chance of getting better wages, better benefits, better pensions. I look forward to confirming these two outstanding nominees later today.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I wanted to just literally pop into the discussion here this morning. There is a great deal going on here in the Capitol.

The discussions on the bipartisan infrastructure bill are continuing in a

good, productive way, and we are hopeful we will be able to move to that great deal of work that has gone on by folks on both sides working in extraordinary good faith.

And to be able to proceed on this matter, I think, will be an important policy initiative but also good for our process in this body.

CONGRATULATING LYDIA JACOBY

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I don't come here this morning to speak to that at this moment but to just give a strong Alaska "attagirl" shout-out to Lydia Jacoby.

A few days ago, most people outside of the State of Alaska had probably never heard of Lydia, 17 years old, from Seward, AK. Seward is a pretty small community in the south central part of the State. It is a coastal community. It is a fishing community. It is a hard-working community.

Lydia is a typical high school student at Seward High School, except she is a swimmer, and is she an extraordinary swimmer. To see the news the other night of her gold, of her unexpected and spectacular win, was a moment of pride for all Alaskans, a moment of pride for Americans that just makes your heart swell. So I wanted to come to the floor and share that.

I actually was able to start my morning off early, but in a good way, by being able to call Lydia—she is over in Japan, obviously—and to speak with her directly and offer my congratulations. Mr. President, you can tell when people are grinning ear to ear, even though you are separated by thousands of miles and you are talking over a telephone. This morning, Lydia Jacoby was grinning ear to ear as I was sharing my words of congratulations and she, just her exuberance and delight for being able to represent the United States at these Olympics in this way.

We are extraordinarily proud. Lydia has put Seward and certainly Seward High School on the map. Folks are coming up to me saying: Gosh, I didn't realize you didn't have Olympic-meter swimming pools in most of your communities. Well, that is true. Lydia did some training that I think most would say: It is going to be a long, hard slog to get to any Olympics.

I think the dedication of this young woman has certainly played out. The support that she has received from her parents over the years, the support she has received from her community, is an example of just good, strong Alaska roots: everybody working hard and just doing your best on a daily basis.

Lydia Jacoby has absolutely done her best. She set the gold standard, and we are just extraordinarily proud of this young Alaskan woman.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.